

ST. ARMANDS KEY LUTHERAN CHURCH

SARASOTA, FLORIDA

STUDY NOTES FOR SAKLC CONVERSATIONS ON THE BEATITUDES OF JESUS

MARCH 10, 2016

“THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE PEACEMAKERS”

(Matthew 5:9)

[SEVERAL COMPARATIVE TRANSLATIONS]

(GREEK) - μακάριοι οι ειρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.

(NRSV) - *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”*

(CE) - *“Happy are people who make peace, because they will be called God’s children.”*

(MSG) – *“You’re blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That’s when you discover who you really are, and your place in God’s family.”*

(AMP) - *“Blessed [spiritually calm with life-joy in God’s favor] are the makers and maintainers of peace, for they will [express His character and] be called the sons of God.”*

A JOINT PRAYER FOR PEACE *attributed to St. Francis*

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is discord, union;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that we may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and

it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL TEACHINGS ABOUT PEACE:

- A) In an age of turmoil, **peace is one of the greatest words in the world!**
- 1) The Kingdom that God promised was to be characterized by peace.
 - **Isaiah 9:6-7 – “For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.”**
 - **Isaiah 66:12-13 – “For thus says the LORD: I will extend prosperity to her like a river, and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing stream; and you shall nurse and be carried on her arm, and dandled on her knees. ¹³As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.”**
 - 2) St. Paul admonished the early Christians to pursue the things that make for peace.
 - **Romans 14:19 – “Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.”**
 - 3) People of the Kingdom must follow after peace.
 - **1 Thess. 5:13 – “esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.”**
 - 4) The Lord proclaims that there is no peace for the wicked.
 - **Isaiah 48:12 – “There is no peace,’ says the LORD, ‘for the wicked.”**
- B) **Peace is not found in treaties, but in the hearts of human beings.**
- 1) Peace among the nations of the world begins with peace within the individual.
 - 2) Peace comes when we replace greed, distrust, and hatred with love, mercy, faith and brotherly kindness.
 - 3) It is not the absence of war that makes for peace, but rather the presence of God.

- 4) God's peace has nothing to do with politics, armed forces, forums of nations, or even councils of churches. It has nothing to do with statesmanship, no matter how great, or with arbitration, compromise, negotiated truces, or treaties.
 - 5) God's peace never evades issues. It knows nothing of peace at any price. It does not gloss or hide, rationalize or excuse. It confronts problems and tries to solve them; and after the problems are solved it builds a bridge between those who are separated by those problems. It often brings its own struggle, pain, hardship and anguish, because such are often the price of healing.
 - 6) It is not a peace that will be brought by Presidents, Prime Ministers, Kings, diplomats, or international humanitarians. It is exclusively the inner personal peace that only God can give to the soul of humans and that only God's children can exemplify.
- C) **The setting of this Beatitude shows that the peacemaker does not refer to an arbitrator.**
- 1) The peacemaker is the peace preacher:
 - Romans 10:15 – ***“And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”***
 - Colossians 1:20 – ***“and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.”***
 - 2) It is the peace that Christ came to preach:
 - Ephesians 2:14-17 – ***“For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body^[a] through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.^[b] ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.”***
 - Acts 10:36 – ***“You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all.”***

- Romans 5:1 – *“Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

A) BIBLICAL AFFIRMATIONS ABOUT THE PEACE OF GOD

1) Peace with God can only be found in Christ.

- John 16:31-33 – *“Jesus answered them, ‘Do you now believe?’³² The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me.³³ I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!”*
- Romans 5:1 – *“Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

2) Peace comes through a knowledge of Christ.

- 2 Peter 1:2-4 – *“May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.³ His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.⁴ Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants of the divine nature.”*

3) For the Christian, the peace with God will guard our lives.

- Phil. 4:6-9 – *“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.⁸ Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.⁹ Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.”*

4) Examples of this peace are also found in the O.T. Read the story of **Abigail and David** in 1 Samuel 25:14-35:

- What did Abigail do to bring about peace?
- What specific things helped David rethink his decision?
- What principles can we learn from Abigail’s decision?

B) SOME THINGS THAT DESTROY PEACE

1) Contentiousness

- Prov. 26:21 – *“As charcoal is to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome person for kindling strife.”*

2) Gossip and Slander

- Prov. 16:28 – *“A perverse person spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.”*

- Prov. 26:20 – *“For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases.”*

a) Before you repeat something, ask yourself these questions:

- Is it true?
- Is it needed?
- Is it complete?

b) Use of negative language; our words are a reflection of our character.

- Suggested reading: James 3:1-13

c) Seeking **personal** vengeance.

- Romans 12:19 – *“Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God,¹ for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”*

- Vengeance will destroy your life.
- In a classic book, *None of These Diseases*, published early in the 20th century, Sim I. McMillen, MD, writes these timeless words: *“The moment I start hating a man, I become his slave. I can’t enjoy my work anymore because he even controls my thoughts. My resentments produce too many stress hormones in my body and I become fatigued after only a few hours of work. The work I formerly enjoyed is now a drudgery. Even vacations cease to give me pleasure. The man I hate hounds me wherever I go. I can’t escape his tyrannical grasp on my mind ... The man I hate may be many miles from my bedroom; but more cruel than any slave driver, he whips my thoughts into such a frenzy that my innerspring mattress becomes a rack of torture. The lowliest of serfs can sleep, but not I. I really must acknowledge the fact that I am a slave to every man on whom I pour the vials of my wrath.”*

C) DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE?

- 1) Peace is something that must be pursued.
 - **1 Peter 3:10-12 - "Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit;
¹¹ let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."**

 - **Psalm 34: 12-16 – "Which of you desires life, and covets many days to enjoy good? ¹³ Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.
¹⁴ Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. ¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry.
¹⁶ The face of the LORD is against evildoers, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."**

- 2) The "GOLDEN RULE" is a great starting point (see Matt. 7:12)

- 3) Being a peacemaker also involves how I treat my personal enemies and those who are seeking to oppose me.
 - **Romans 12:20-21 – "No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."**

- 4) Reconciliation takes precedence over worship:
 - **Matt. 5:22-25 – "But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire. ²³ So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison."**

- **Matt. 18:15-20** – *“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶ But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”*

5) There are divine limitations to peace.

- **Luke 12:51-53** – *“Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! ⁵² From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; ⁵³ they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”*
- **Acts 5:29** – *“But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than any human authority.”*

D) THE PROMISED BLESSING

1) What is the blessing promised in this Beatitude?

- a) That we shall be called the sons of God.
 - ✓ Who shall call us that?
 - ✓ Not other worldly humans.
 - ✓ God Himself acknowledges us as belonging to Him!
- b) Most of us are thankful for our family heritage; our ancestors; our parents; our family name. But the greatest human heritage cannot match the believer’s heritage in Jesus Christ, because we are *“heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.”*
 - **Romans 8:17** – *“and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.”*

- c) By word and example, we are called the “*sons of God*” because we reflect the character of our Father; by our promotion of peace we have entered into the very sphere of the Father’s activity. We are, as it were, God’s own “*Peace Corps.*”
- 1 John 3:1 – “***See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.***”
- d) The phrase “sons of God” includes both men and women, because with sonship comes the rights of inheritance.
- Galatians 3:26 – “***for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.***”

E) CONCLUSIONS:

1. Happiness can be found through peacemaking. Our world is marked by conflict in every dimension of life. God loves peace, so He sends us into the world to mend broken relationships.
2. We need to make peace a priority. Peacemaking is the last *character quality* in the Beatitudes – the peak, the pinnacle. The height of a happy life is to wage peace!
3. We need to take the initiative to seek peace. Being a peacemaker is different than someone who appeases through wimpy niceness and conflict avoidance. Nor are we a peacemaker who deters conflict through iron rule and personal force. A peacemaker is someone who creates wholeness, wellbeing, shalom (Hebrew for ‘peace’) as he/she goes about life.
4. We need to be willing to pay the price of peace. Peacemaking is redemptive!
5. We need to make a constant plea for peace. Communication is always a part of peacemaking.
 - 2 Cor. 5:20 – “***So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.***”

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